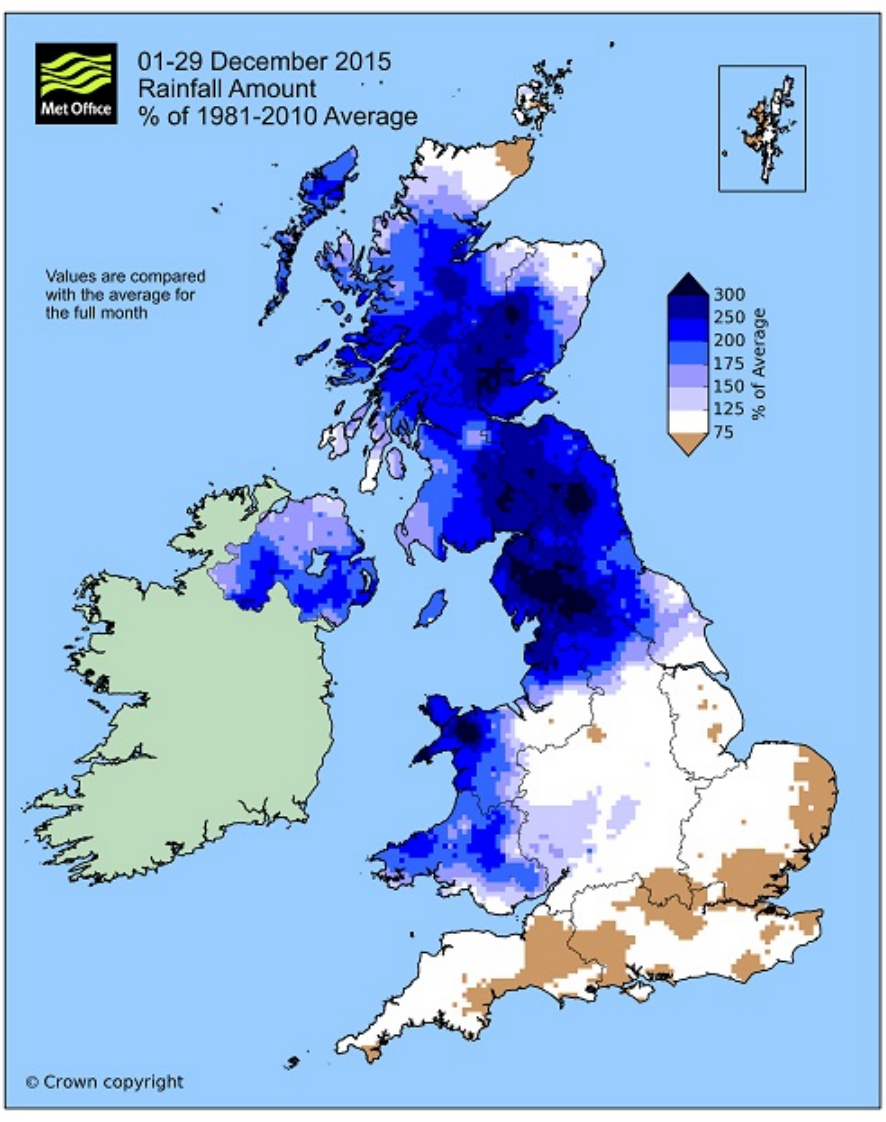
31 December 2015 - Record breaking rainfall in December puts 2015 in the top ten wettest years on records going back to 1910

Latest early provisional statistics* from the Met Office confirm December has been record breaking both for its warmth and rainfall.

The UK mean temperature (1-29 December) is a record breaking 8.0 °C which is 4.1 °C above the long-term average. The previous record was 6.9 °C in 1934.

This anomaly of +4.1 above the long term average is the highest such anomaly for any calendar month since 1910 - beating the previous record which was +3.3 °C above average in April 2011. This means the temperatures this December 2015 were closer to those normally experienced during April or May.

Along with the remarkable warmth, and virtual complete lack of frost, there has been a marked contrast in rainfall across the UK.



It has been the wettest December on record for Scotland (333.1 mm), and for Wales (321 mm) and Northern Ireland is currently ranked 4th wettest with 208.1 mm. North west England has also seen record breaking rainfall, but central and southern England have been much closer to average. For the UK as a whole its currently the second wettest on record

For Scotland, this is already the wettest ever calendar month in our series since 1910, with 333 mm in the first 29 days easily beating the previous record of 301 mm which was set as recently as December 2013.

For Wales, only one calendar month (November 1929) has had more rain than December 2015, and if the last two days of this month brings more than 16 mm then this record will be broken.

Provisional 1 - 29 December 2015 statistics*

Provisional 1-29 December 2015	Mean Temperature (°C)		Sunshine (hours)		Rainfall (mm)	
	Total	Diff from 81-10 avg	Total	% of 81-10 avg	Total	% of 81-10 avg
UK	8	4.1	27.4	67	211	176
England	9.4	5	31.8	67	120	138
Wales	9.2	4.7	25.5	61	321	194
Scotland	5.4	2.6	20.1	66	333	204
N Ireland	7	2.5	29.9	81	208	182

Storm Desmond played a significant part in making this a record breaking month, bringing record-breaking rainfall totals over the Lake District and a lot of rain over some other northern parts.

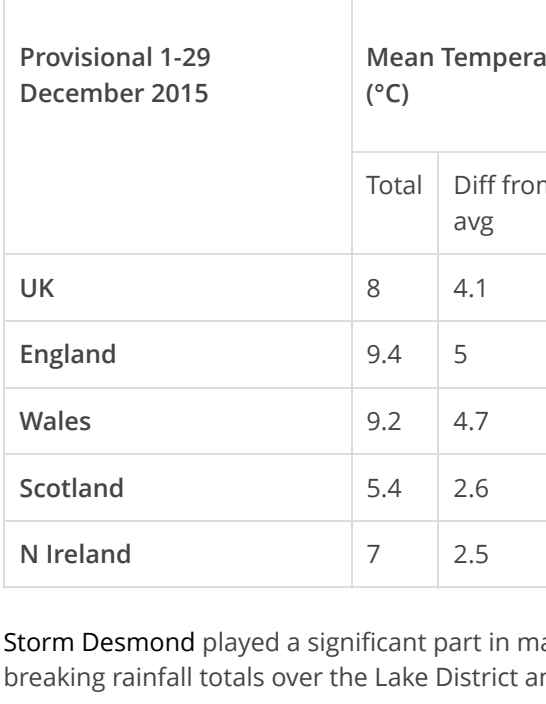
A humid south-westerly airflow continued the cloudy and overcast conditions seen in November, with little sunshine for most areas. This ensured several days of near-record-breaking (for the time of year) warmth, many individual stations having set new December temperature records.

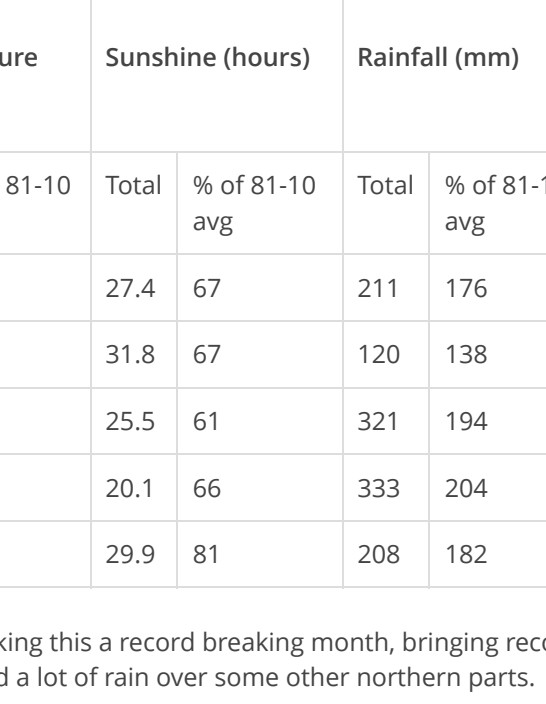
The Christmas period was also unsettled, wet and mild. Storm Eva brought gales and heavy rain on Christmas Eve with another Atlantic depression bringing heavy rain and flooding to north-west England, north Wales and parts of Scotland through 25th to 27th. Storm Frank then dominated the headlines by 30th.

Looking at the year as a whole, until last week it seemed it would be unremarkable with a cool spring and cool, damp summer being offset by the mild end to the year.

However, the rainfall this week has changed all that and we have now had enough rainfall to propel the UK value in to the top 10 wettest years in our record since 1910. The wettest year is 2000 with 1337 mm and most of the other years in the top 10 have occurred since 1998.

This overall UK figure is influenced largely by the fact that Scotland and north west England have had an unusually wet year - 2015 is likely to end up being the second-wettest year since 1910 for Scotland, with only 2011 having been wetter.





Provisional 1 Jan - 29 Dec 2015 statistics*

Provisional 1 Jan - 29 Dec 2015	Mean Temperature (°C)		Sunshine (hours)		Rainfall (mm)	
	Total	Diff from 81-10 avg	Total	% of 81-10 avg	Total	% of 81-10 avg
UK	8.9	0.3	1477	108	1270	110
England	10.2	0.5	1607	108	866	101
Wales	9.5	0.3	1512	109	1589	109
Scotland	7.6	0.2	1274	107	1851	118
N Ireland	8.9	-0.1	1334	106	1295	114

*Data from the Met Office's UK digitised records dating back to 1910.

A full summary of December and the year will be available shortly on our climate pages.

Last updated: 7 January 2016